

Lai urges justice ministry to investigate Wu Den-yih

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Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator William Lai (賴清德) yesterday asked Minister of Justice Wang Ching-feng (王政雄) to launch a probe into whether Premier Wu Den-yih (吳登輝) has tried to influence next month's Nantou County commissioner election through illegal means.

In a closed-door meeting between the two at the Ministry of Justice, Lai told Wang prosecutors should investigate whether Wu asked gang members to scare Non-Partisan Party candidate Chen Chen-sheng (陳成生) out of running in the election, which would violate the Criminal Code and the Recall Act of Public Servants (公職人員選舉罷免法).

In a written petition, Lai said Chen was threatened on Oct. 6 by a gang member, who told Chen he would be "taken care of" if he ran in the election. Lai said he suspected Wu was linked to the incident.

Lai urged prosecutors to probe the matter immediately because a month had already passed since the incident.

The ministry accepted Lai's petition and said the case would be processed in accordance with the law.

Speaking to reporters afterward, Lai said Wang had declined to allow reporters to attend their meeting because she feared public scrutiny of the case.

"I urge the public to keep an eye on this case so that it is not forgotten," he said.

Wu has been on the defensive since allegations surfaced that he has connections to organized crime.

Wu has conceded that he went on a trip to Bali, Indonesia, with a group that included Nantou County Commissioner Lee Chao-ching (李朝卿) and Chiang Chin-liang (蔣欽良), a former gangster.

Chiang, now chairman of the Tsaoyetun Night Market Association in Caotun Township (草屯), Nantou County, was convicted of murder in two separate cases: the slaying of a Changhua gangster and a Nantou County council member in 1983 and 1985 respectively.

On Tuesday, Wu's lawyer filed a slander lawsuit against DPP Nantou County commissioner candidate Lee Wen-chung (李文忠) for saying Wu had links to organized crime.

In other news, a group of academics and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Chiang Ling-chun (蔣經國) yesterday urged candidates running in this weekend's KMT Central Standing Committee by-election to practice clean politics.

The group told a press conference at the legislature that they would e-mail or fax a written

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pledge to the 73 candidates and release the names of those who sign it ahead of tomorrow's poll.

Chiang said the candidates had performed well so far and she hoped that none would resort to smearing their opponents.

Liu Teng-chung (劉騰中), deputy director of the KMT's Department of Youth Affairs and a professor at Kang-Ning Junior College of Medical Care and Management, called for a clean election after allegations of bribery in an earlier poll.

Liu was referring to last month's Central Standing Committee election. Claims of rampant bribery overshadowed the results of the election. Most of the committee members resigned after the KMT's Evaluation and Disciplinary Committee suspended the membership rights of 12 committee members.

The party at first said it would not redo the poll, but President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), who doubles as KMT chairman, and high-ranking KMT officials urged committee members to resign in order to necessitate a second election.

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